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THE INDEPENDENT

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PEARL HARBOR.

The History of its Acquisition.

ITS LOCATION, APPEARANCE AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

An Unorthodox View by a Studen.

(*Continued.*)

THE LANDS AND THEIR TITLES.

It is no unusual thing to find a land scheme behind propositions for the acquisition by the Government of any given piece of property for public use. Few navy yards have been established; few outpost offices erected; few forts or arsenals built without the colored gentleman in the woodpile being unmasked; and such gentleman of color very generally stands forth as the advocate of a land owner or syndicate. And so it is in Pearl Harbor at the present time. There is a most patriotic desire on the part of divers pretended citizens of America, who have long since forsworn their natural allegiance for the benefits of official salary in Hawaii, to confer upon their much beloved Uncle Samuel certain lands in and about the lagoon, in exchange for their aforesaid Uncle's surplus gold coin. Of course, nothing could be more disinterested than the efforts of those patriotic gentlemen to make the desired exchange. Such is always the case. They are burning with ardor to see the flag of their native land floating over the placid waters of the lagoon, and are not only willing, but determined to promote that most worthy object—for a generous consideration. But before discussing individual cases and lands, a brief glance at the titles is desirable, whose history is brief, and comparatively simple.

Prior to 1848, the feudal idea that all land is owned by the Sovereign, and all occupants hold under him and pratically at his will, prevailed in its full vigor in Hawaii. But the advance of civilization among the aborigines, coupled with the material interests of the foreigners, then constantly increasing in numbers in the Islands, developed the necessity of a more liberal system of land tenure. Hence in the year mentioned, the reigning King, Kamehameha III., by virtue of the Royal grace which found expression in the act of the very primitively endowed legislature existing under the constitution then recently granted by the King, made the Great Mahele or Land Division to which all titles refer and which was the genesis of them all.

The prevailing idea involved in the Great Mahele was to make a division of the whole territory into three substantially equal parts, of which the King personally should continue to own one, the Government one and the people the third. It was fortunate for the Hawaiian race that Kamehameha was sufficiently ignorant and unenlightened not to have learned what the dominant party in Hawaii today assert and act up and act upon in their intercourse with the community respecting the definition of that much-abused phrase, "the people." Kamehameha was sufficiently antique in his ideas to suppose that "the people" meant and embraced the whole body of his subjects, without regard to race, creed, color or previous party affiliation, to quote from the modern manifestos of American politicians. But such back number notions find no place in the Government of to-day in Hawaii, whose votaries, when looking for a definition of the phrase quoted find it impossible to see beyond the little clique of aliens who, by the grace of Minister Stevens, were placed in the political saddle, on January 17, 1894, and have since intrenched themselves in their position, while 'the people," as elsewhere understood, and as formerly understood in Hawaii, contented themselves to await the answer of the United States to the protest against the Stevens aggression.

As usual in the case of a concession by a King to the people, Kamehameha did not neglect his own interest in this Division. He was both the King, and the sole Judge of lands he would "assign" to himself, as well as to the others in interest, and in that dual capacity, it would be strange indeed if his interests had suffered. The King selected a lot of lands, by their names, scattered over the entire group of Islands, and the Government's portion was similarly assigned. Then there was created a land Commission, for the settlement of the claim of private individuals, who were awarded for simple titles to such lands as they could prove they had previously occupied by the Royal assent or acquiescence, and exempt from fedual services or rental paid to any surbordinate chief. Many thousands of claims were thus passed upon, in a manner satisfactory to the people, and characterized by a liberality of construction and presumpin favor of the occupant as opposed to the interet of the chief, quite at variance with the spirit of feudalism. The awardees of these claims were afterward granted Royal Patents of their land, upon the payment of almost nominal sums by way of commutation to the Government, but the theory of such commutation is nat quite clear, seeing the Government had no valid claim to the lands so awarded.

The small holdings thus awaded were called kuleanas, and the word kuleana has since come into use indifferently to describe not only one's right to a piece of land, but the land itself.

Of course the vast majority of the lands, in point of area, thus assigned to "the people," were gobbled by the high chiefs, to some of whom vast extents were granted, by virtue of their former exercise of dominion over the tenants thereof. The unit of land description is the ahupuaa, a tract invariably running from the sea to the crest of the mountains, beyond which other ahupuaas extend to the opposite shore. There is history written in this name, which is combined of the two elements "ahu," a collection, and "puaa," swine: it having been customary in very ancient times for the chief holding an ahupuaa' (those larger divisions were all held by the chiefs,) to render an annual tax or rental to the King, of one swine for each ahupuaa under his dominion. The area of these ahupuaas differ widely, and while some include only a few hundred, others embrace many thousands of acres. Thus the ahupuaa of Honouliuli, lying between the Pearl Harbor Lochs and the crest of the Waianae moutains, contain over 50 000 acres.

Within the different ahupuaa are many kuleanas, originally allotted to the peasantry. Next smaller than the ahupuaa, is the "ili" of which many are contained in the former division, and still smaller is the "moo," which may be more than a house lot or a taro patch. Each land, under whichever of these divisions, has its separate name, however small in area, showing a prodigious development of the bump of locality in the aboriginal Hawaiian.

The lands surrounding Pearl Harbor are comprised within comparatively few grants. The ahupuaas are for the most part of great extent, owing chiefly to the fact that the most powerful and influential chiefs were there located in the early days. Along the north and west shores of the lagoon, however, are a great number of small kuleanas, indicative of the higly concentrated population of that locality in times past,—a feature which is still a marked characteristic of the vicinity, as compared with other districts.

The great land of Honouliuli, (which includes that of Puuloa, lying to the westward of tha Harbor entrance,) was awarded to a high Chiefess named Kekauanohi, wife of the powerful and popular Kealiiahonui, who died in the early fifties. It has come down by few conveyances to the ownership of Mr James Campbell, probably the most wealthy resident of Hawaii today; and within its borders is located the famous and recently established Ewa Plantation, where the world's record in sugar culture was last year broken, by their harvesting within a fraction of ten tons per acre, from an area of 125 acres. From this ownership is excepted the Puuloa lands, referred to, which are the property of Mr James I. Dowsett, one of the first children born of white parents on the Islands, now an extensive and successful rancher. These lands are devoted to ranching, while near the entrance to the Harbor, salt works of considerable capacity are profitably conducted by Mr. Dowsett. Next adjoining Honouliuli is the ahupuaa of Hoaeae, comparatively small in area, and then comes the extensive and valuable Waipio, in whose borders is embraced the peninsula first herein referred to, which runs to the very entrance of the lagoon, and separates west Loch from the other portions of the Harbor.

Waipio was the property of a very influential Hawaii, (tho' not a chief,) named John Ii, who embraced the faith, and some of the thrifty practices of the misionaries, learned to read and write, and was made a Justice of the Spureme Court, a position to which it has never been deemed necessary, in Hawaii, to appoint men learned in the law. Mr Ii died, and left a daughter. She was sole heir to the Ii estate.

She married Mr. C. A. Brown, who with the patriotic instinct of a true American, places those acres at the disposal of his home Government, with an alacrity that almost verges upon anxiety to devolve their ownership upon his Uncle Samuel. There comes to him with peculiar force and meaning, as he stands at times upon the cliffs of Waipio, the sentiment of Scott's stirring lines:—

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead
As never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my Native (wife's) land."

The major section of the land scheme underlying the Pearl Harbor Naval Station craze is right here at Waipio, and at Ford's Island, now owned by this same patriotic Mr. Brown. This gentleman went all the way to Colorado some years ago, in order to by up the title to Ford's Island, from a son of the original Dr. Ford for whom it is so named. He secured the deed he went for, but was soon compelled, (or persuaded) to convey the Island to his wife, a mortage upon whose other hands furnished the funds for the purchase.

That he had the centingency of selling the Island to the U.-S. Governmen in mind sufficiently appears from the fact of his having given his vendor a separate agrement to pay him a further sum of Fourteen Thousand Dollars, in case he, Brown, should sell the Island to the United States, or any other Government, As he is now supposed to have been in Washington, engaged in the endeavor to sell to Uncle Sam, and as Ford thinks he will come out at the small end of any deal which Brown may conduct, and as the agreement for more money to be paid Ford up yon the condition above mentioned was so drawn as to make it unrecordable under Hawaiian law, (as a means of notifying all the world of Ford's equities,) Ford is now stated to be about to begin suit to declare his position and interest in the Island.

The fact taht Mr Brown has most persistently devoted himself to the entertainment of Admirals Irwin, Walker and Beardsiee during the last years and that his swell dinners to the officers mentioned are famous lends color to the belief that there may be some understanding between him and them in the premises.

The vicinity of the Harbor is not destitute of other little land projects whose advocates look through a vista having the U. S. Treasury at the other end of it. There is a variegated boom right on the Pearl City Peninsula, so called for the reason that no "city" is apparent in the locality. That imaginary city was laid out by the Oahu Railway & Land Co., a corporation running a little railroad from Honolulu to Ewa Plantation, a distance of about 15 miles, most of which skirts the lagoon. The original "city was platted on the uplands, running from the shore of the Harbor to the mountains, several miles away. It was intersected with avenues bearing names that soothe, and streets bearing names that jingle, and a crowd of suckers were one day corralled in an auction room, hypnotized by the auctioneer, and the lots were sold off in a trice at figures that would create a boom in Denver. This was several years ago. The lots are still there, and as vacant as ever, for the most part. The projector of that scheme, in showing his imaginary "city" to an irreverent visitor one day, remarked that the one needful to make Pearl City great and prosporous, was a plentitude of water, interspersed with good society; to which the visitor replied that Hades needed even less, as it has the good society.

Having worked the uplands for all they were worth, the ardent projecter moved his paper "city" down upon the Peal City Peninsula, and laid out more lots, and parks, and avenues than would grace a railroad center in Ohio. After much effort he succeeded in giving some of these away to certain speculators, and swapped a few more fore different kinds of old junk. The one investor, has built several cosy cottages, for which there are no tenants, and a school house, for which there are neither teacher nor pupils, and a church for which there are no worshipers; while some other owners, to a total of less than a dozen, have built little camping-out cottages which they sometimes occupy,—and so the Peninsula section of Pearl City stands. Of course each lot owner as an axe to grind, and wants to grind it at the United States Treasury. Each thinks he seens a fortune in his few square feet of soil, in case of the establishment there of the much desired naval station. Though few in numbers, they are fittted with full lung power, and make a good deal of noise when prating of tha advantages, (to Uncle Sam, of course,) of such an establishment. But such philanthropic schemes are all alike, in their main features and symptoms, and the American public, having seen so many need little details of description as to this one.

From Pearl City eastward, and around to the entrance to the Harbor, the land is variously owned. The Railway Company, the Crown Land Commissioners, the great Bishop Estate, and the estate of the late Queen Emma, (devoted to the support of the Queen's Hospital in Honolulu,) hold the larger tracts; and, strange to relate, there is no symptom of a land boom, or of a scheme to unload upon Uncle Sam visible in these localities.

(*To be concluded.*)